has already been identified for provision of ATM facility, the site preparation is complete and the order for ATM has already been .placed with the vendor. The deliveries are expected within 2 months. The ATM would be operationalised by SB1 on delivery of the ATM by the vendor.

Representation for raising exemption limit of income tax

4309. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Members of Parliament have represented for raising the exemption limit of income tax in view of the high rise in prices in the country; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The decision of the Government is reflected in the Finance Bill, 1997.

Proposal for forward trading of Gold and Silver

4310. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bullion Merchants Associations has urged Government to allow forward trading of Gold and Silver in the country to curb price fluctuations and smuggling;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the bullion exchange system throughout the country was closed down in 1963- under the policy of Gold Control Order; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action proposed to be taken by Government to stabilise the prices of gold and silver in the country *vis-a-vis* the international market to curb smuggling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) the information is being collected and will be. laid on the Table of the House.

Modernisation of Calcutta Mint

4311. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether M/s. Micon, which was consultant for modernising the Calcutta Mint, suggested that three blanking lines and two buck furnances be installed in the Mint;

(b) if so, whether this has be-in implemented; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA. KUMAR): (a) to (c) The recommendation of M/s. MECON, who were project consultants for the Mint's modernisation project, have been implemented to the extent approved by the Government.

Autonomy to State Co-operative Banks in giving credits

4312. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether NABARD plans to give the State Co-operative Banks autonomy in giving credits;

(b) if so, details thereof; and

(c) the advantage likely to be accrued by giving more autonomy to 360 district level Central Co-operative Banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (b) As reported by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Develomment